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LONDON metro®

Lotto MAX Friday's Jackpot
$50 MILLION estimated
PLUS MAXMILLIONS
2 EXTRA estimated
$1 MILLION PRIZES

THREE TO WATCH IN SOCHI

- **12 p.m.** It begins! Sidney Crosby and the rest of Team Canada open their Olympic title defence against Norway.
- **7:05 a.m.** Marianne St-Gelais — who won silver at this in Vancouver — could be racing for another medal at the short track in the women's 500-metre.
- **9 a.m.** Christine Nesbitt — one of Canada's most decorated long track speed skaters — races in the women's 1,000-metre. She's a three time world champion, and the reigning Olympic champion in that distance. GREG DOWNS/FOR METRO

OK, new plan: Transparency, police promise

Chief, senior administrators plan to put together more detailed version of 2014 budget proposal PAGE 2

Occupy city hall? Meh

Occupy London leader — who last year vowed to run for London mayor — instead plans to run a 'campaign of pro-democracy' PAGE 4

NEWS WORTH SHARING.

Concert hall 'a bargain,' says talent agent

Feldman Agency. London's missing out on shows, says music management leader

MIKE DONACHIE
mike.donachie@metronews.ca

Let's have a crescendo of praise for London's new proposed performing arts centre, one of Canada's top figures in music management says.

And the city better grab the chance now because it's "a bargain," said Richard Mills of the Feldman Agency in Toronto.

There's a gap in what London offers, according to Mills, and a top-quality, mid-sized venue will bring more shows to the city.

The $164-million performance venue proposal was presented to council members by Music London and The Grand Theatre this week, with $16.7 million of the money being sought from the city. The rest of the funding cocktail involves the feds, the province, private developers and public donations. The plan includes two towers of condos, a hotel and improvements to The Grand.

They're being subjected to "due diligence" by city staff and will return to a council committee Feb. 24.

Music London — a new partnership between Orchestra London, developers and volunteers — says the city's investment will be returned with interest within 10 years, in tax and other revenue. That's a great deal, says Mills.

He books artists into as many as 85 places on tours of North America and said he's often forced to skip London. He diplomatically declined to name famous names who have opted out of the city.

Mills explained that Budweiser Gardens is great for big events like last week's visit by Elton John. But it's not right for many other artists, so they head on down the road to places like Windsor, Hamilton or Kitchener. Budweiser Gardens seats 9,100 people, and that's fine for Elton John, Pearl Jam or Tom Petty.

But what if you're cool and talented but can't attract that big a crowd? What if you need a more intimate setting or different acoustics? Centennial Hall just isn't good enough, said Mills, and there's general agreement for that at city hall.

Orchestra London wants to replace Centennial Hall with a new, modern venue called the Celebration Centre, and it includes a 1,300-seat theatre. That's more the style of the artists that Mills specializes in, like this weekend's visitor to Centennial Hall, jazz singer Matt Dusk.

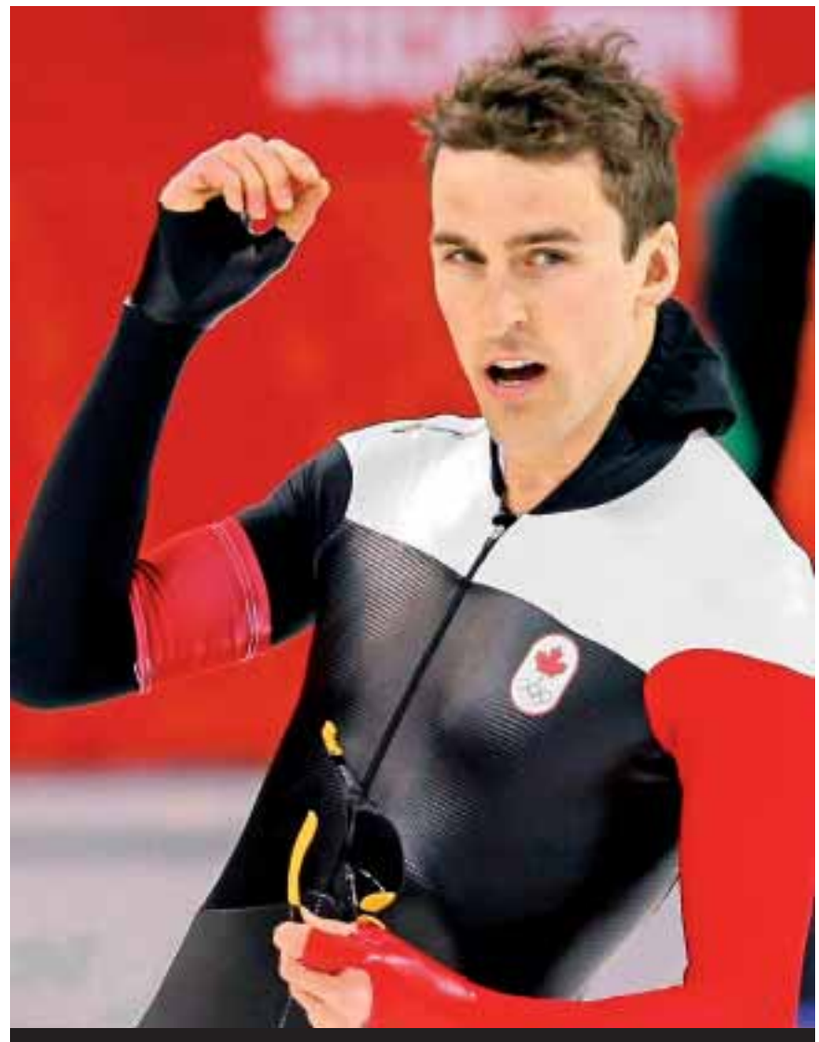
Asked what he thinks of the performance venue project, Mills said: "I completely support it because it's been needed.

"(London) is probably the largest city in Canada that's been under-served by its larger facilities."

"Great artists deliver a great experience," Mills added, "and you need a great hall to experience them in."

Agents to the stars

- On the Feldman Agency's talent roster is a dizzying array of famous names, from Michael Bublé to Bryan Adams to Rush.
- The agency also represents Elvis Costello, Hedley, Barenaked Ladies, The Tragically Hip, Alyssa Reid and Nelly Furtado.
- Richard Mills has worked to encourage the growth of artists including Natalie MacMaster, Ron Sexsmith, The Tenors, Jesse Cook, Sophie Milman, Matt Dusk and the Cowboy Junkies.



10 AND COUNTING...

Olympian Denny Morrison led Canada to its only Sochi medal on Wednesday, taking silver in 1,000-metre speedskating. His win brings the country's total medal count to 10. More coverage on pages 16-18. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEWS 1

Police promise transparency in future budget talks

3.3% tax-supported increase sought. Police board chair believes compromise can be reached

SCOTT TAYLOR
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City council has asked for more detail.

Now, London police say they're willing to deliver.

Chief Brad Duncan and senior administrators are putting together a more detailed version of their 2014 budget proposal. Officials have been crunching the numbers since last week, when council made its request, said Michael Deeb, chair of the police services board.

"I don't think there's been a time that I can remember during my time here at the board where we've been asked to provide something, and we didn't provide it," he said.

Weary of broad warnings about how policing would be affected if the service doesn't get its full 2014 budget wish list, councillors have charged Deeb and Duncan with telling them exactly what would be kept and what would be lost under two different, but fairly similar, budget scenarios.

Officials have warned of service cuts and even layoffs if council saddles the force with a budget less than the 3.3 per cent tax-supported increase they say is needed.

Along with that increase, they also want a $900,000 share of the money that comes from growth on the rolls along with more than $500,000 that's being pulled from a reserve fund.

Police will go to council on Feb. 25 with an itemized list of implications stemming from tax-supported increases of 2.7 and 2.9 per cent.

Deeb believes a compromise can be reached, but he won't say what level of financial support would be needed to make everyone happy.

"As long as that (number) aligns with the needs of public safety," he said.

That statement is telling because, in the end, the Ontario Civilian Police Commission might very well reject whatever council decides to dole out.

The commission has the power to do that if it has concerns for public safety due to a lack of officers or other resources.

Police operated on $89 million in 2013. This year, they want that pushed to $93 million.

Follow-through

"I don't think there's been a time that I can remember during my time here at the board where we've been asked to provide something, and we didn't provide it."

Michael Deeb, chair of the police services board

'Still too much'

Henderson would have rejected budget hikes

The absence of Coun. Dale Henderson in recent budget debates left two crucial votes on the police budget deadlocked.

Dale Henderson
METRO FILE

But Henderson, who's back at city hall meetings after a health scare, has said he wouldn't have supported the proposals anyway.

Council members voted 7-7 on awarding the cops a 2.5 per cent and a 2.6 per cent budget increase.

Both options were "still too much for me," Henderson told Metro this week.

"As far as I'm concerned, that money can be spent a lot better," Henderson said. As for his health, Henderson said he's now "back to normal" and is still determined to hold the lines on taxes in the 2014 budget.

MIKE DONACHIE/METRO

London police Chief Brad Duncan defends his budget request during a debate at city hall. MIKE DONACHIE/METRO

Invacare. Closure of Hargrieve Road factory by mid-2014 means 70 jobs lost

Another 70 factory workers in London will soon lose their jobs.

Ohio-based company Invacare plans to close its Hargrieve Road plant by the middle of this year. The plant makes beds for long-term medical care facilities, and that work will be transferred to a third-party manufacturer, spokeswoman Lara Mahoney said.

She declined to say where that work will go, but confirmed it won't be in Canada.

The London plant also makes other furniture for medical facilities. The jobs involved in that side of the business will go to an Invacare site in Florida.

"What has precipitated it is Invacare has grown significantly through acquisition as a company," Mahoney said. "As part of our long-term strategic planning we have recognized that we need to reduce complexity within our business.

"Part of that is reducing our facility locations so that we're taking full advantage of our global supply chain."

That means closing the London plant the company bought from Carroll Healthcare in 2003.

"It is a difficult decision because they are very good associates there," Mahoney said. "We're currently working through the details of the severance packages that will take place after the six-month transition period."

MIKE DONACHIE/METRO

Altercation. Police looking for suspect in stabbing

A 22-year-old man will survive after being stabbed in the hip outside the Salvation Army's Centre of Hope Tuesday night, police said.

Police are searching for a suspect in the incident, which occurred about 8:30 p.m. in the area of Clarence and Bathurst streets after an altercation between two men.

The suspect is described as a white man in his early 20s, standing about five-foot-eight to five-foot-11 with a medium build and blond hair.

He was wearing a baseball cap, a blue hoodie and white running shoes.

SCOTT TAYLOR/METRO

Contact number

Anyone with information is being asked to call London police at 519-661-5670.

Case of missing London woman remains a mystery two years on

Hope fades. Family says chances of her returning 'not in their favour'

The family of a London woman who's been missing for two years is coming to terms with the likelihood they'll never see her again.

"As the days, months and now years pass, (we) still hold on to the little glimpse of hope to see her one day. The odds of this occurring are not in (our) favour and (we) know that," Vanessa Fotheringham's family says in a statement released days before the anniversary of her disappearance.

By many accounts, Fotheringham, 24-years-old at the time, all but vanished Feb. 16, 2012. She was last seen after dark in the area of Quebec and Oxford streets.

Police have talked to countless people and pursued several leads and stress the case is a high priority for them. Vanessa's mother, Yvonne, said detectives have been in regular contact with the family.

Meanwhile, friends and family members continue their search, in part, via a Facebook page started last year.

The page — riddled with smiling images of the woman's face, pleas for her to come home, birthday wishes and words of inspiration — is dedicated to spreading Fotheringham's story to at least 100,000 people. "This young lady is missed by many people. Lets try and get them some answers if anything at all," one of the most recent posts reads.

"We need to bring this woman home to her daughter, her parents, her family and friends are missing her dearly," reads another.

Her family says they "will remember the days and cherish those moments they had with her."

They're also addressing her personally on this anniversary, saying: "We have and will always love you Vanessa ... please come home to us."

SCOTT TAYLOR/METRO

At a glance

- Vanessa Fotheringham is described as white, five-foot-three, 110 pounds with long brown hair and brown eyes.
- Anyone with information should call London police at 519-661-5670 or Crime Stoppers at 800-222-8477.

Vanessa Fotheringham FACEBOOK

Lionel Richie's tour will bring him to the Forest City

Singer Lionel Richie is getting ready to turn back the clock at Budweiser Gardens. With nearly five decades of music under his belt, Richie is bringing his worldwide All the Hits All Night Long tour to the Forest City on July 31. Tickets go on sale Feb. 21. Visit lionelrichie.com for details.

GETTY IMAGES

Police want to speak to driver in school bus incident

Cops are making inquiries after a south London incident involving a school bus.

But they're not saying that a crime was committed. They want to talk to a bus driver who stopped to pick up kids in the area of Highview Avenue West and Highview Crescent before school on Monday.

The fully marked bus stopped at a pickup spot as normal, with all the proper lights and signs, and opened the doors. Kids were about to get on when they realized it wasn't their bus. The bus left.

Cops have said there was no attempt to entice children on to the bus, and there are no reports of similar acts. The only unusual part is there was a dog on the bus.

They think it might have been a driver who made a mistake with his route, but are asking anyone with information to call 519-661-5670.

METRO

Court case

Defence takes the stand in Sher trial

The RCMP misidentified an accused man's voice in a secretly recorded conversation which allegedly involved homemade bombs and potential targets of a terrorist attack, a defence lawyer argued Wednesday.

The case against Khurram Syed Sher, a London doctor, revolves around dozens of pages of transcripts from a July 2010 meeting between him and his two alleged co-conspirators in Ottawa.

But Sher's lawyer, Michael Edelson, challenged the accuracy of Det. Mireille Clement's transcripts of the audio recording, which were edited three times in the past three years. Clement admitted Wednesday that "it is sometimes difficult" to identify the speaker due to poor audio quality, but said she used better computer technology in the most recent revision last month.

"If they spoke on top of each other, I would have problems," said Clement, but added, "I've been involved with (the investigation) for the past three years. I've heard his voice on and on and on."

Sher, 31, has pleaded not guilty to conspiring to facilitate terrorist activity. The two co-accused cannot be named due to a publication ban.

JOE LOFARO/METRO OTTAWA

Occupy leader decides he won't be running for mayor

Democracy campaign. Eric Shepperd expresses support for Coun. Matt Brown

MIKE DONACHIE
mike.donachie@metronews.ca

He may have been one of the early leaders of Occupy London, but this campaigner does not plan to occupy city hall after all.

Last summer, after the dust of the occupy movements settled, Eric Shepperd announced he was going to run for mayor. But now he's decided he won't file election papers, and will instead focus on a campaign for encouraging people to vote.

"I'm not entering any more," Shepperd said.

Revolutionary?

"In the coming months I will work with individuals and groups to educate, engage and excite Londoners about their city, and encourage the revolution of participation." Eric Shepperd

"I'm running a campaign of pro-democracy, which means that I kind of have to be a bit impartial."

Since the days of occupying Victoria Park to demand social change, Shepperd's been determined to see citizens engage in politics.

But he's since decided that running for mayor would probably not be the best way to do that. Instead, he's been meeting city hall candidates, including mayoral hopeful Matt Brown.

"I do support Matt Brown," said Shepperd, who's 30 years old and works in IT. "I think he's the best candidate in the race."

That's not a full endorsement of Brown, he cautioned, because their opinions do differ at times. But Shepperd says he will be happy if the current Ward 7 councillor beats incumbent Joe Fontana on the election of Oct. 27.

Fontana hasn't filed papers yet but has anticipated he has plans to do so. So far, in addition to Brown, four other candidates have thrown their hats into the ring: Dennis Perry, Arnon Kaplansky, Jim Kogelheide and Dan Lenart.

GO CANADA, GO!

Staff from the provincial Ministry of Community and Social Services offices on York Street were overcome with enthusiasm for Canada's Olympic efforts in Sochi on Wednesday. They took to the ice outside Covent Garden Market to act as public cheerleaders for the medal winners, getting grins and high-fives from people passing by. On a day with few medal prospects, speedskater Denny Morrison came through for Canada. Morrison, of Fort St. John, B.C., won silver in the 1,000 metres for Canada's lone medal of the day. At the end of the competition day, the Canadian team was tied for second at 10 medals with the Netherlands, two behind Norway. MIKE DONACHIE/METRO

Budget unfair to Ontario: Premier

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty made a deliberate decision to unfairly shortchange Ontario to the tune of $641 million in yesterday's federal budget, Premier Kathleen Wynne charged Wednesday.

"We're seeing a pattern of the federal government getting out of, I would suggest, the business of nation building, and particularly in this case turning its back on Ontario," Wynne said at a news conference with Ontario Finance Minister Charles Sousa. "We're here today to demonstrate that yesterday's budget is part of that pattern."

The minority Liberal government claims funding cuts in the last eight years of federal Conservative budgets have cost the province billions of dollars.

Ontario will get 18 per cent of its revenues this year from federal transfers, the same percentage it received in the mid-1990s, but Sousa said that's still a cut.

"The level of funding to the province of Ontario is actually going down on a per capita basis," Sousa said. "That's the fact."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Fanshawe prof heading to India

A Fanshawe College professor is heading overseas for a pretty hefty assignment.

Linda Whitehead's trip will take her to Jharkhand, India, where she'll coach girls affected by human trafficking and teen pregnancy.

Whitehead, who teaches in Fanshawe's recreation and leisure services program, has a long history in coaching, listing developing NCAA women's soccer programs and coaching with the Canadian Women's National Soccer Team at the International University Sports Federation Games as some of her accomplishments.

She'll be joined in her efforts by nine other sports leaders committed as part of the Commonwealth Games Canada's SportWORKS program. The volunteers are being spread across five continents, sharing their expertise in areas ranging from athlete development to sport science.

In India, Whitehead's work will be done alongside Yuwa, a not-for-profit, youth-led organization promoting youth participation through empowerment.

METRO

Edmonton. Backpack offers grieving mother answers in son's suicide

Jan Thorpe finally has some answers about her son's death.

Jonathan Langille's backpack was returned to his mother Tuesday, less than a week after the 19-year-old was killed after stepping off the platform in front of an LRT train at Coliseum Station in Edmonton.

Following the accident, Thorpe made a public plea for help finding the backpack, which had been picked up by a bystander who watched as Langille took his own life.

"The girl who took it called us last night," said Thorpe. "She was very sorry about what happened."

In the backpack, Thorpe said, Langille left his journal, which included information about why he took his own life.

Jonathan Langille FACEBOOK

"He said he was overwhelmed," she said.

Thorpe said the family doesn't plan on pressing charges against the woman, who told Thorpe she was using drugs at the time she took the backpack. Thorpe said she hopes the young woman is able to get some help.

LEAH GERMAIN/METRO IN EDMONTON

Gay rights

Part of Kentucky's same-sex marriage ban struck down

U.S. District Judge John G. Heyburn II concluded Wednesday that Kentucky must recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states, striking down part of the state's marriage ban and saying Kentucky's laws treat homosexuals differently in a "way that demeans them."

"Assigning a religious or traditional rationale for a law does not make it constitutional when that law discriminates against a class of people," wrote Heyburn.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Income splitting exposes rift among Conservatives

Tensions. Powerful Tory ministers make contradictory statements on Harper campaign promise — but who spoke out of turn?

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty gestures during question period in the House of Commons in Ottawa on Wednesday.
SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Two of the most powerful men in the Conservative cabinet have openly contradicted one another on a key campaign promise — a split that speaks to the different ideologies and allegiances in the Tory caucus.

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty started the ball rolling Wednesday by candidly questioning the wisdom of expanding income splitting for Canadian families.

During the 2011 election, Prime Minister Stephen Harper promised to bring in the measure once the federal books were balanced. Allowing couples with children to split their income would mean parents could pool their income together in order to qualify for a lower tax bracket.

"I would pay down public debt and reduce taxes more, myself, but I am only one person," Flaherty said in a post-budget interview before the Ottawa Chamber of Commerce.

But Employment Minister Jason Kenney insisted the campaign promise would be kept, a sentiment echoed by Treasury Board President Tony Clement.

"We made a platform commitment to introduce income splitting when we get to a balanced budget; we'll get to a balanced budget next year, that's very clear," Kenney said.

So who spoke out of turn? Flaherty or Kenney?

One senior Conservative suggested Harper actually has his own reservations about income splitting. The Tory suggested social conservatives within the party would be more in favour of such a plan because it appeals to traditional families where only one parent works.

Other Conservatives speculated that Flaherty is feeling free to speak his mind because he has one foot out the door.

There have been tensions between Flaherty and Kenney recently over Toronto Mayor Rob Ford. Flaherty is a friend of Ford's, and reacted angrily when Kenney called on Ford to step down. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Georgia tells guests of Olympics to stay clear of Abkhazia

Georgia on Wednesday called on foreign visitors to the Winter Olympics to keep out of Abkhazia, a Russia-aligned breakaway territory just south of Sochi along the Black Sea coast.

The International Olympic Committee, however, said there was no reason not to go to Abkhazia.

Abkhazia declared independence shortly after Russian forces crushed the Georgian army in a brief 2008 war, but most of the world still considers it Georgian territory. Only Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua and two Pacific island nations have recognized Abkhazia as an independent country.

Russia's attempts to facilitate travel across its border with Abkhazia, only five kilometres (three miles) south of Olympic venues, was "a provocation aimed at undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia" and "misleading foreign citizens," the Georgian Foreign Ministry said in a statement. Asked the IOC's view on Olympics visitors going to Abkhazia, IOC spokesman Mark Adams said, "Why not?"

"The talks and exchanges between the two governments, that's entirely been to the two governments," he said. "In terms of going to Abkhazia ... well if it's safe, people will go there."

Alexandra Kosterina, spokeswoman for the Sochi organizers, refused to comment.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said a possible meeting between Putin and Georgia's new president, Giorgi Margvelashvili, would be discussed at talks in early March between envoys from the two countries. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Talks

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Monday that he hoped the Games would help to mend fences and expressed a willingness to meet with his Georgian counterpart.

- The Georgian government responded positively.
- Mutual personal enmity had prevented any meeting between Putin and former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, whose term ended in November.

Child euthanasia. Belgian bid expected to pass despite opposition

Belgian lawmakers clashed sharply on Wednesday over whether to grant terminally ill children the right to ask to die, a legal option already possessed by the country's adults.

The issue is pitting backers who see it as a question of mercy against opponents who claim the law is rushed, flawed and lacking medical rationale. Despite the spirited debate in the House of Representatives, the bill is widely expected to pass on Thursday.

"Our responsibility is to allow everybody to live, but also to die, in dignity," said Karine Lalieux, a Socialist member of the House of Representatives who favours extending Belgium's 2002 euthanasia law to minors under 18, with the added conditions that their parents approve and they understand what the decision means.

Sonja Becq, a Christian Democratic colleague, denounced the potential change, saying modern-day science is capable of relieving pain in very sick children until their illnesses runs their natural course.

"We cannot accept that euthanasia be presented as a 'happy ending,'" she said. Belgium sets legal limits on who can legally acquire cigarettes and alcohol, she said — so why not for euthanasia?

The Senate, the other chamber of the federal legislature, adopted the legislation by a wide margin in December. If it passes in the House, all that would be needed for child euthanasia to become legal in Belgium is the signature of King Philippe, normally a formality.

The only other countries to have legalized euthanasia are two of Belgium's neighbours, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. In the Netherlands, children between 12 and 15 may be euthanized with parents' permission, while those who are 16 or 17 must notify their parents beforehand. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nigeria. Extremists attack northeast town

Hundreds of Islamic extremists posing as soldiers attacked a northeast Nigerian town for hours, killing 39 people and razing a mosque and more than 1,000 homes, survivors said Wednesday.

In the ruins of the burned-out mosque, bodies covered in cloth lay ready for burial Wednesday, including three small shrouds covering children who did not look more than 10 years old.

"Why us? Why us?" one woman wailed, trying to understand why militants set on creating an Islamic state in Nigeria would attack a town of mainly Muslim farmers.

Numerous villages in the area have been attacked and hundreds have been killed in recent months despite a nine-month-long military state of emergency.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canada Bread sold to Mexican firm for $1.83B

That's a lot of dough.
Maple Leaf bakes up tasty deal to offload division to baking giant Grupo Bimbo

Canada Bread has struck an agreement to be acquired by one of the world's largest bread companies in a transaction valued at $1.83 billion.

Grupo Bimbo, based in Mexico, said Wednesday it will buy Canada's dominant breadmaker with the support of Maple Leaf Foods, which owns a 90 per cent stake in the operations.

What Grupo Bimbo gains from buying Canada Bread is a position in the Canadian marketplace and the ownership of popular brands like Dempster's and Bon Matin.

"The company fits exactly within our strategic soft spot as a leader in its domestic market," Grupo Bimbo chief executive Daniel Servitje said in a conference call.

"(This is) a new market for Grupo Bimbo which helps strengthen our presence in the Americas and one that had grown steadily and with little volatility in terms of pricing."

The transaction also ends Maple Leaf Foods' pursuit of a buyer for the bakery division, which it announced last October. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Slicing off divisions

Maple Leaf Foods is in the midst of a restructuring plan to improve the profits of its overall business, which is primarily focused on meat products. It has already sold various divisions and hopes to complete the process by next year.

Bosnia. Unrest due in part to failed privatizations of state-owned companies

The recent violence in Bosnia, with scenes of burning government buildings and protesters pelting police with stones, has many root causes. One of them is the failed privatizations of state-owned companies.

When Bosnia abandoned communism about two decades ago, officials devised a plan that wouldn't mean mass layoffs for state workers. It was supposed to be a smooth transition after the 1992-1995 war that left 100,000 dead and devastated the country's infrastructure.

More than 80 per cent of privatizations have failed, becoming a core reason behind Bosnia's worst unrest since the end of the war. Many well-connected tycoons have swept into these companies, stripping them of their assets, declaring bankruptcy and leaving thousands without jobs or with minimal pay. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A Bosnian protester sets a local government building on fire during protests in the Bosnian town of Tuzla last week. AMEL EMRIC/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

United Auto Workers

Volkswagen to get das auto union in the U.S.?

Workers at Volkswagen's lone U.S. plant in Tennessee are kicking off a three-day election about whether they want to be represented by the United Auto Workers union.

If the union succeeds, the Chattanooga plant would become the first among foreign automakers in the South to unionize. The election begins Wednesday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fourth-quarter results

Air Canada shares hit turbulence

Air Canada vowed it won't be thrown off course in 2014 even though its shares went into a tailspin Wednesday after severe weather and a weaker dollar hurt fourth-quarter results and promised to inflict more pain in the new year. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Black Wednesday?

Bitcoin's value drops by almost 50% after freeze

A freeze on bitcoin withdrawals imposed by three major exchanges won't cause any long-term harm to the digital currency's credibility, entrepreneurs attending a bitcoin conference said Wednesday.

Bitcoin's value, which topped $1,100 US in November, dropped below $630 US Wednesday after news of the freeze. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 90.93¢ (+ 0.16¢)

TSX 13,900.49 (+ 19.50)

OIL $100.37 US (+$0.43)

GOLD $1,295 US (+$5.20)

Natural gas: $4.85 US (-$0.09)
Dow Jones: 15,963.94 (-30.83)

THE CANADIAN CLUB OF LONDON

Mr. Porter has over 25 years of experience analyzing global economies and financial markets. He excels in interpreting and communicating the impact of key economic and financial data for businesses.

Come out to The Canadian Club of London's breakfast event to meet Douglas Porter, identified as the best economic forecaster in Canada for the prior two years by Bloomberg in May 2012!

Douglas Porter
Identified as the best economic forecaster in Canada

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NUMBER OF HAPPY COUPLES: 12

HE SAYS

John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

Normally I'd say Valentine's Day is a holiday that should be cut short like its decapitated namesake.

Normally I'd argue it's not a real holiday unless I'm earning time and a half.

Normally I'd suggest that the only reason Valentine's receives any attention at all is that it lands when the weather is barren and any real holidays are far away. It's like a stranger in a bar when the lights come up. Our time with it might be awkward and trashy, but we'll take what we can get.

But I won't say any of that because I have a girlfriend for the first Valentine's this decade. So — just in case she cares — Valentine's is a wonderful, splendiferous day (wheee!) and I can't wait to spend it with her in whatever reasonably priced restaurant she desires.

As a loving tribute to my return to coupledom, I offer this fragrant bouquet of information:

Valentine's Day By The Numbers:

One: The loneliest number.
Two: The least lonely number.
Three: The soon-to-be-lonely-again number.
Four: The polygam-est number.

Relationships-

13,491,617: Number of Canadians who would laugh in your face if you asked them out right now.
12: Happy couples.
700: Percentage spike in the crime rate since same-sex couples were allowed to marry and society crumbled.
1.3: Median number of children it will take to salvage your crumbling relationship.
580,000: Number of times someone will say, "I don't know, what do you wanna do?" on Valentine's Day (average three per couple).
170: Number of guys pretending they like Michael Bublé at any given moment.
5: Number of days after Valentine's you can wait before dumping your partner, guilt-free.

Zero: Number of unrequited loves thinking about you right now.

Gifts-

$356: Minimum amount your partner will spend on you if they really love you.
32: Number of insect larvae legally permitted in the chocolates you're about to receive.
15: Number of years until corporations automatically deduct a minimum $100 directly from your chequing account as part of a Mandatory Incidental Love Fee, or MILF.
8,732: Number of relationships that will spark with the heat of a thousand suns thanks to the gift of a heart-shaped doughnut.
60,000: Approximate number of bees killed annually for Bee Mine? card industry.
$1.4 billion: Value of all Valentine's cards purchased in North America.
1.4 seconds: Average time spent glancing at card.
14,541: Number of Canadians unemployed in the candy, floral and gift card business because of you and your friends' cynical attitudes.
Fewer than 12: Number of minutes I spent on research.

ZOOM

Did Russia get this wrong?

COURTESY GREG WYSHYNSKI/YAHOO SPORTS

Rings' colours not tied to continents

No, the different-coloured Olympic rings don't correspond to specific continents.

But you'd be forgiven for thinking differently if you're going to or from Sochi's airport.

Five enormous concrete sculptures of the rings welcome visitors, each labelled in bold letters, in Russian and English, with the name of a continent: Africa, Asia, Australia (pictured), Europe, and the Americas.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ALEXANDER ZEMLIANICHENKO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In actuality...

- International Olympic Committee spokesman Mark Adams says "the rings are not assigned to each continent."
- When Pierre de Coubertin, considered the founder of the modern Olympics, designed the rings a century ago, he chose black, red, yellow, green and blue because every flag in the world bore at least one of those colours, according to the Olympic Museum.

Clickbait

HANNAH ZITNER
hannah.zitner@metronews.ca

JOSH SEMANS/FLICKR

So maybe those piano or violin lessons in elementary school didn't exactly stick, but surely you remember a scale or two. Test your musical memory, or just have fun making music with these apps that turn your phone into a handheld musical "instrument." Warning: This will annoy pretty much anyone in earshot and you will have way more fun creating "songs" than anyone will have listening to them.

Shaker:

Turn your phone into a pocket percussion centre. From the triangle to the tambourine to the tam tam, this free iTunes app has the drum section of your band covered.

Harmonica:

Both Apple and Android have their eyes on the handheld harmonica (oh wait, real ones are also handheld), but the Android version lets users get up close with their phones and play with their mouth (option for hands too, if you don't trust where your phone's been).

Virtuoso Piano 3:

Just like riding a bike, once you learn to play Heart and Soul you never forget. Or so no one's ever said. Test the theory and tickle the ivories on your phone.

Twitter

@metropicks asked: Canada's men's hockey team plays Norway Thursday. Should fighting be allowed in Olympic hockey?

@CALanuza: Yes, it brings excitement to the game; Remember this guys are pro athletes.. #Sochi2014 #yyc

@Dweller15: off course, what kind of question is it? What a hokey without fight?

@cndneh: why should fighting be allowed at all?

@Mr_B_Robertson: No. The greater the threat of injury to NHL players, the greater the chance the NHL won't let its players go the Olympics.

@kkjohal769: NO!!fighting is not necessary send the right message to our young people

@larrington: with fighting allowed, world does not take NHL ice hockey seriously as a sport; it's just entertainment.

@MainStPoodle: Yes. And growling, chasing and biting.

Follow @metropicks and take part in our daily poll.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:
Send us your comments: londonletters@metronews.ca

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They couldn't get no satisfaction

So they started a band. The Beverleys bring the noise to the Black Shire

BACKSTAGE PASS
Mila Petkovic
london@metronews.ca

Punk band The Beverleys is slated to play The Black Shire Pub (511 Talbot St.) on Feb. 21. From left are Joanna Lund (vocals, guitar), Audrey Hammer (drums) and Susan Burke (vocals, guitar). CONTRIBUTED

"I thought you were a soccer mom or a folk singer/songwriter."

It's something the three-piece all girls band The Beverleys are often told by shocked audience members after blowing them away with an intensely noisy grunge-punk set, where anger and dissatisfaction are rife on stage.

"Nine times out of 10 they are expecting something cute and sweet. I like seeing their surprised reaction," says guitar player and vocalist Joanna Lund. "It's the noise I make, and I don't think of it in terms of gender.

"It's the only thing I can do right now, and it's the only thing that feels right."

On tour with their new self-titled EP (Buzz Records), the Toronto-based punk-rock unicorns are stopping by The Black Shire Pub in London on Feb. 21.

With a total running time of around seven and a half minutes, their three-song debut release is a fast and blistering well-worth-it punch to the gut — or wake-up call perhaps?

The girls came together out of a shared sense of malaise, a critical eye and a "this is not enough" attitude, says guitarist/singer Susan Burke, who met drummer Audrey Hammer and Lund, who are sisters, several years ago.

"Dissatisfaction is something a lot of people don't want to admit to themselves. We weren't very satisfied with our lives, relationships or work," says Burke.

"We weren't happy with the 'Finish high school, get a job, work till you die' mentality. We all have day jobs, and sometimes you are like, 'This is it?' There has to be more."

That frustration was what stirred their desire to pour their feelings into music, and, so, The Beverleys were born. There was only one problem: They didn't know how to play the right instruments.

"We had to teach ourselves when we started the band," laughs Hammer, who immediately called drums while Lund and Burke both took to guitar and singing.

"It started out as fun — an outlet to be really loud. We spent a year making noise and drinking and playing like crap. But then it started developing and we became more interested," says Burke.

Three years later, they have completed their first EP — a quick dive into their personal struggles with addiction, love and lost dreams.

The Beverleys (who, fun fact, share a jam space with Metz and F—ed Up) are working on a full-length album they hope to finish recording by next fall.

For the London show, they'll be playing alongside label mates HSY and local band Whipping Wind.

Doors open at 9 p.m. Cover is $5.

Quoted

"When I wrote the lyrics to This Is Not A Union, it was about my personal struggles with addiction. I wrote it so long ago, now I look back and laugh at it. ... You have to have the ability to laugh at your flaws and yourself to get through the day."

Joanna Lund, guitarist/singer of The Beverleys

Around town

- **Let's dance**. Dance rock group The Wet Secrets from Edmonton roll through Call The Office (216 York St.) on Saturday. Doors open at 7 p.m. Cover is $5.
- **On film**. London Ontario Media Arts Association is having a 16mm film-making workshop on Saturday at Fanshawe College from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost is $15 for members and students. Visit lomaa.ca for more details.

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METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Shia LaBeouf ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

LaBeouf, are you really #SORRY or is this piece just a pile of bull-Shia?

Shia LaBeouf is sorry. So sorry, in fact, that he's embarked on a "performance art" piece this week at a Los Angeles gallery space entitled #IAMSORRY. According to the gallery's press release, "Shia LaBeouf is sorry. Sincerely sorry. He will be in situ at 7354 Beverly Blvd. for the duration. Implements will be provided." Visitors are invited, one by one, to enter a curtained-off room where LaBeouf sits at a table in a tuxedo with a paper bag over his head, eye holes cut out. He says nothing, responds to no questions, and then removes the bag to show that he is crying. LaBeouf is scheduled to be staring at visitors and crying through Sunday. Fans of pointing out LaBeouf's penchant for plagiarism have been happy to remark on the similarities between this stunt and Marina Abramovic's 2010 installation piece The Artist is Present, during which she would sit in a gallery and let strangers stare at her one at a time, eventually bursting into tears.

Lip-synch claims hitting Britney one more time

Britney Spears

Britney Spears is being dogged by more lip-synching accusations after an Instagram video surfaced taken during her current Las Vegas residency that shows her microphone pack fly off her waistband, pulling her earpiece mic away from her mouth without effecting her vocal performance at all. It wouldn't be such a big deal if it weren't for claims made by Spears' team before the launch of the residency. "Britney Spears will be singing live during her show. She will not be 'lip-syncing,'" her rep said.

The Word

Will $75M deal bring sizzle back to celeb cook's career?

Paula Deen has found a key ingredient to reheating her tarnished brand — a cash infusion worth at least $75 million US from a private investment firm.

The Savannah-based celebrity cook announced Wednesday that she's launched an umbrella company that will oversee her restaurants, cookbooks, product endorsements and other remaining slices of her media empire. The new company, called Paula Deen Ventures, said private-equity firm Najafi Companies is investing $75 million to $100 million to help Deen make a comeback.

Deen's fortunes took a dive last year after comments she made under oath during proceedings in a lawsuit, namely that she had used racial slurs in the past, became public. The Food Network dropped Deen, as did pork producer Smithfield Foods, book publisher Ballantine and several other companies that paid her to endorse their products.

In a statement, Deen praised the partnership with Phoenix-based Najafi and the decision to name Steven Nanula, who has already worked with Deen for the past two years, to serve as CEO of Paula Deen Ventures.

"I know this is the right decision to lead my team, as we continue to share quality products with my fans — whose love and support have built my brands," Deen said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Eva Mendes

Eva X-es out rumours that she's with child after airport opt-out

Eva Mendes knows the consequences of being picky about security. The actress recently opted out of using a walk-in body scanner at the airport, prompting speculation that she's pregnant. "You know those X-ray scanners, which are really creepy? They basically see you naked," she tells Ellen DeGeneres during an interview. "And not only that, but there's a radiation aspect to it. So I always opt out. I always ask for a personal pat-down. That was good enough reason (for people to assume I'm pregnant.)" Sure, but what about those breakup rumours circulating since she and Ryan Gosling haven't been spotted together since October? While Mendes' publicist was already quick to shoot down such reports, Mendes offers some jokey plans for Valentine's Day that pointedly do not include Gosling — at least not in person: "I'm not a big Valentine's Day person," she says. "I'll probably just order a deep dish and watch The Notebook or something. Just cry, weep."

Twitter

@EllenBarkin
Do you think I could be the "global ambassador" for Lay's potato chips?

@ActuallyNPH
I'm so proud of @RealHughJackman for hosting this year's Tony Awards and for calling me an hour ago to say, 'Suck it!'

@SarahKSilverman
Doing a kickstarter to raise $ for rich kids who have never heard the word no. Please help!

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SHOPPERS DRUG MART

Gifts with a creative flair

ASTRID VAN DEN BROEK
For Metro

Forget roses — this year, you want your Valentine's Day gifting to have a creative flair to it. So what to give?

Here are a few ideas for you to steal.

Instead of chocolate ...

Get some old-school candy. Does your love have a sweet tooth? Hit a retro candy store such as Sugar Mountain and put together a basket of Nerds, Lik-a-Maids, Necco Wafers, Laffy Taffies and more for a sweet night.

Or go the opposite route and give your love a chilled bottle of wine along with a gift bag of crackers, upscale cheeses and pates to ensure a romantic night in.

Instead of red roses ...

Get a balloon arrangement. Many flower stores also sell balloon packages for someone who may get the sneezes with flowers.

Or pick up a piece of artwork at a local boutique or shop.

Instead of restaurant reservations ...

Get your inner Bobby Flay on and surprise your partner with a bag of groceries. You read that right — only your job will be to turn that bag into a gourmet meal at your place while your Valentine sits back and sips Merlot.

Or buy her favourite takeout, a bottle of wine and the kind of sappy movie that's only allowed to be seen on Valentine's Day. A cosy night at your place may just be for what your partner is looking.

Instead of a classic diamond engagement ring ...

Propose with a vintage ring you have picked out especially for her. Be sure to work with a vendor you trust to ensure you get a quality ring.

Or there are many alternates to a traditional engagement ring. Think a black diamond, a ring featuring a ruby, sapphire, emerald or topaz stone. Or you can browse craft sites such as Etsy.com to find rings featuring petrified wood, square rings, rose rings and more.

Instead of red roses this year, get a balloon arrangement for your sweetheart. GPOINTSTUDIO/SHUTTERSTOCK

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ROAD TO THE THREE PEAT

Fall in love with these sweet ideas

ASTRID VAN DEN BROEK
For Metro

Fantastic. How exactly did Valentine's Day sneak up on you? If you forgot to plan for Friday, let Deanna Lorraine help you out. This San Diego-based dating coach shares her best ideas for couples of all stages.

There are a number of ways you can impress your significant other this Valentine's Day. LUMINAIMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK

If you have just started dating

"Surprise her with a big bouquet at her work," Lorraine said. Or amaze your new beau with your gourmet side. "Take them to your place for candles, music and a gourmet meal you've prepared."

If you have been together a long time

"Plan a last-minute overnight trip to somewhere within driving distance or a quick flight away," Lorraine said. Have a look at travel websites to score last-minute flight and hotel deals.

Or surprise your partner with your thoughtfulness. "Pick up tickets to a concert or play they're interested in."

If you are single

Google can turn up many singles events happening on Valentine's Day.

"Or create a singles event — throw an anti-Valentine's singles party," Lorraine said. "And tell everyone to invite any single person they know."

Or how about taking a trip?

"Plan a trip with a friend who's single — a road trip or getaway for the weekend like New York or Vegas. So something you can look forward to together. Make it an excuse to get out of town and away from all the couples."

If you are on a budget

Create couple coupons. "Make a book of coupons to redeem for a massage or a night of me cooking dinner for you," Lorraine said.

Or get scrapbooking. "Make either a physical or online book. There's some great cheap or free software online such as Animoto that you can put together video clips and pictures with music."

If you have a family

Do the kids like to celebrate with mom and dad?

"Create a big dinner and have everyone help cook—and also cook something you normally wouldn't," Lorraine said. "Have everyone dress up, too."

But it's important parents get some time together, too, she added.

"So after the kids are in bed, have a secret date in your master bedroom with a decadent dessert."

Guess what's coming to Danielle

Who's that girl?
Canada's Danielle Knudson only told her family and a handful of close friends that she'd booked the campaign of a lifetime. I Guess everyone else is about to find out.

ELIZABETH BEDDALL
elizabeth.beddall
@metronews.ca

Danielle Knudson says her next goal as a model is to be featured on the cover of Sports Illustrated. We'd sign off on that!
HANDOUT

When I meet up with Guess' new it-girl Danielle Knudson, she's surrounded by loose copies of her new ad campaign for the iconic brand. The spread features photos of the blonde bombshell frolicking in the late-afternoon Laguna Beach sunlight.

These images are in stark contrast to the surrounding polar-vortexed environment of our chat, which has left Danielle and I both sweater-bundled as we get warm inside the confines of the Guess boutique in Toronto's Queen West neighbourhood.

But while my pasty face and salt-stained boots give me away as a winter-whipped local, you'd think this new Guess girl, with her sunkissed skin and golden locks, was born and raised along the southern California shoreline. But make no mistake about it, she's Canadian.

You're now living the model's dream life in New York, but you were born and raised in Alberta. Is there anything you miss about home?
I loved growing up in Red Deer — I was there right until I was 18. And my family now lives just outside of Banff. Going home, I still love going home to see the mountains. We have a ski hill in Red Deer that no one knows about called Canyon Ski Area, which is kind of hidden in the middle of nowhere. I spent many years growing up there skiing.

The story of your rise to fame is an insanely quick one. As I understand you were at a shoot for another client and were asked to take a selfie, which was forwarded to Guess LA. Guess booked you that day, flew you out to LA that night and began shooting with you the next day. Correct?
Yes, about six months ago I got booked for the look book. Paul Marciano came to the shoot and met me and the agency called me and they put me on hold for everything and the rest is kind of history. It was like boom, boom, boom.

Tell me a little bit about the day of the Laguna Beach shoot. What was the general itinerary?
The campaign was actually shot over three days. We woke up very early because the lighting was beautiful in the morning — maybe 5:30. It went by so quickly. We would do hair and makeup and go to location, and shoot so many looks. We'd shoot until the sun went down.

Paul Marciano was on set with you at this shoot as well. What's he like?
Paul has been so amazing — he's been so supportive of me. Always told me to be myself. He just made me feel like I'm important to the brand — that they wanted me there.

Flash forward a year from today. What do you foresee?
My life is changing very quickly — I'm taking everything in as it's coming my way.

She's got this in the bag

Purell on-the-go hand sanitizer
$1.79, purell.com

L'Oréal Paris Colour Riche Balm
$7.96, walmart.ca

Benefit's High Beam luminescent complexion enhancer.
$32, sephora.com

Tabasco Sauce Miniature
$0.55, tabasco.com
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Fall in love with a gluten-free delicacy

This recipe serves 12. JEFF COULSON

Sweet Week. These Flourless Chocolate Lava Cakes are perfect for any Valentine

1. In heatproof bowl over hot (not boiling) water, melt chocolate with butter, stirring until smooth. Stir in vanilla seeds. Remove from heat.

2. Whisk in sugar. Whisk in eggs and egg yolks, 1 at a time. Whisk in cocoa powder and salt.

3. Pour into twelve 3/4-cup (175 ml) ramekins; place on rimmed baking sheet. (Make-ahead: Cover and refrigerate for up to 24 hours. Bake as directed, adding 5 minutes to baking time.)

4. Bake in 425 F (220 C) oven until edges are set and centres are slightly jiggly when lightly tapped, about 15 minutes. Let cool on pan on rack for 3 minutes. Run knife around edges and turn out onto plates. Garnish with strawberries, and whipped cream. EXCERPTED FROM CANADIAN LIVING: THE COMPLETE CHOCOLATE BOOK. COPYRIGHT © TRANSCONTINENTAL BOOKS, 2013. EXCERPTED BY PERMISSION OF TRANSCONTINENTAL BOOKS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. NO PART OF THIS EXCERPT MAY BE REPRODUCED OR REPRINTED WITHOUT PERMISSION IN WRITING FROM THE PUBLISHER.

Ingredients

- 12 oz (340 g) bittersweet chocolate or semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 1/2 cup butter, cubed
- Seeds of 1 vanilla pod
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 6 eggs
- 6 egg yolks
- 1/4 cup cocoa powder, sifted
- Pinch salt
- 12 oz (340 g) strawberries, hulled and diced
- Whipped cream (optional)

FLASH FOOD

From your fridge to your table in 30 minutes or less

Cookbook of the Week

Bringing the sexy back to chocolate

The pros in the Canadian Living Test Kitchen have collected their best chocolate recipes in their book The Complete Chocolate Book.

Chapters focus on the varied, wonderful textures of chocolate treats. Craving an ooey-gooey caramel-topped cake? A dark, chewy brownie? A crispy, crunchy cookie? This book has you covered. METRO

Best sofas to let sleeping dogs lie

Love your pup but not what he does to your furniture? Expert tips on buying pieces that can stand up to pets

"I would always suggest a fabric with a small pattern or texture — a herringbone pattern or small check creates a great disguise."
Designer Jay Jeffers
Designer Jay Jeffers relaxes with one of his two cavalier King Charles spaniels. CAVALIER BY JAY JEFFERS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A dog-sized sofa as an accent piece. ENCHANTED HOME PET/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sydney Masters' dog Angus has white fur. But he loves to play and dig in the mud, so his paws are often brown. And that was a factor in Masters' choice of sofa.

"We didn't choose the lovely white sofa that I wanted. No! We chose a rich dark brown leather couch," said Masters, who shares a Manhattan apartment and a home in France with her husband, who is French, and with Angus, a West Highland terrier.

Finding furniture that dogs and cats won't ruin is a challenge. Here are some things to think about when you're buying furniture, along with some ideas for protecting it from fur, stains and scratches.

Leather

Many dog owners report that leather works well as a pooch-proof alternative to fabric. "It's that kind of glossed leather that repels water and dirt," Masters says. But leather might not work for households with cats, who may damage it with their claws, according to the American Humane Association's chief veterinary adviser Dr. Patricia Olson.

Microfibre

Some cat owners say that microfibre, a synthetic, velvety suede-like material, is a good alternative. It's smoother and less appealing to cats than knits or woven fabric they can sink their claws into. And fur — from dogs or cats — is easily removed from microfibre with a vacuum, lint roller or cloth. Microfibre can also be spot-cleaned.

Fabric

If you own pets and must have fabric-covered sofas, consider this advice from Jay Jeffers of the Jeffers Design Group in San Francisco: "I would always suggest a fabric with a small pattern or texture — a herringbone pattern or small check creates a great disguise."

And don't be afraid to camouflage your pet's fur. "In our house, the furniture is in similar colours to our pets so their fur blends in," Jeffers said.

Fabric slipcovers with zippers that are easily removed and washed are a plus. Some brands, like Ikea, sell fitted slipcovers for their sofas so they can be replaced easily.

A couch of their own

One way to keep pets off your furniture is to give them a couch of their own. Choices abound, from $30 floor pillows at discount pet chains to $1,200-$1,400 US custom B-Home brand dog beds, sold at Jeffers' design store, Cavalier — named for his two cavalier King Charles spaniels. Enchanted Home Pet sells classy dog-size sofas that look a lot like sofas for humans. They run $60 to $300 US depending on size, style and place of purchase; they're available online and in store.

Covering up

The simplest way to protect furniture from pets is a fitted slipcover or other covering designed to stay put and look neat. Matt Kovacs, owner of an English bulldog, Lulu, has tried a number of covers and recommends the SureFit brand. "Without the covers, furniture doesn't stand a chance."

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Skater's sacrifice sets up Morrison's silver

Speedskating. Gilmore Junio drops out of 1,000 metres to make way for teammate

How about having Gilmore Junio carry the Canadian flag into the closing ceremonies of the Sochi Olympics, says Denny Morrison.

How about having both long-track speedskaters lead Canada into Fisht Stadium?

Morrison, taking the place vacated two days earlier by his friend and teammate Junio, raced to silver in the 1,000 metres between a pair of Dutch skaters Wednesday to write the final chapter to a remarkable story of selflessness and doing the right thing.

"It's a dream, a fairy tale story," said an emotional Morrison after earning his third Olympic medal in three Games. "It's difficult to really believe that it's happening."

Said Junio: "I think that's the big power of the Olympics. Anything can happen. Expect the unexpected."

Having come back from a broken leg the year before, Morrison agonizingly clipped a skate on his heel at the Canadian trials in December, falling 50 metres from the finish line and failing to qualify for the 1,000 metres. There was a reskate an hour later at the trials, but his tank was empty and he missed out by four-hundredths of a second.

So the 28-year-old from Fort St. John, B.C., came to Sochi with a place in the 1,500 metres and team pursuit but as a reserve in one of his bread-and-butter distances.

Speed Skating Canada then approached Junio, a 23-year-old from Calgary who was 10th in Monday's 500 metres, and asked whether he would consider giving his place up to the veteran.

"It was 100 per cent my decision. They left it in my court," said Junio, who is better in the 500 than the 1,000. "They said 'You can talk to Denny.'

"But it was an easy decision. The guy's been skating unreal these past few weeks and I wanted to see him skate the 1,000 metres."

Junio also had his own reasons.

"I've a lot to learn in the 1,000 and I think the Olympics, representing Canada, isn't kind of the place to learn such lessons," he said. "We're here to perform. So I thought maybe in four years, hopefully my 500 will be good and my 1,000 will be even better, that I won't have to make this decision. Maybe someone will make it for me." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Silver medallist Denny Morrison celebrates after competing in the men's 1,000-metre speedskating race at the Adler Arena Skating Center in Sochi, Wednesday. DAVID J. PHILLIP/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Olympic spirit

"Maybe that's something we can get behind, because I think that would be really special.... He does embody what it means to be an Olympian ..."

Denny Morrison, on the push to have Gilmore Junio as the closing ceremonies flag-bearer.

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Christmas Markets Passau to Budapest Viking River Cruise
November 29th to December 6th, 2014.

Carlson Wagonlit Travel would like to invite you to our information evening for our Ladies Only Tour - Christmas Markets Passau to Budapest - Viking River Cruises.

Jo Lynch from Viking River Cruises will be giving a presentation on our excursion, Carlson Wagonlit Travel Counsellors will be available for questions and booking information and you will have an opportunity to meet your host for our tour, Gail Verweel.

Date: Tuesday February 18th, 2014
Time: 6:30pm. To 9:00pm.
Place: The Wortley Road House – The Village Room
190 Wortley Rd. London ON, Presentation 7:00 p.m.

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Natalie Spooner jumps on top of Meghan Agosta-Marciano of Team Canada after she scored the winning goal in the third period of Wednesday's victory over the United States in Sochi, Russia. JULIO CORTEZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canada wins first battle against U.S.

Women's hockey.
Agosta-Marciano's two goals lifts spirits of defending champions

Preliminary Round

Canada	United States
3	2

A 3-2 win over the archrival United States was a big boost to Canada's confidence, but history shows Wednesday's result won't mean much if the two women's hockey powers face off for Olympic gold.

But after dropping four straight exhibition games to the Americans before their arrival in Sochi, the Canadian women could feel good about themselves heading into a four-day break before Monday's semifinal.

Canada and the U.S. already had berths in Monday's semifinals locked down before their game.

Trailing 1-0 after two periods, Meghan Agosta-Marciano of Ruthven, Ont., scored a pair of goals and had an assist for the defending champions on her 27th birthday.

Linemate Hayley Wickenheiser of Shaunavon, Sask., who was Canada's flag-bearer in the opening ceremonies, scored a controversial goal and assisted on Agosta-Marciano's equalizer.

Charline Labonté of Boisbriand, Que., stopped 25 of 27 shots for the win and stoned Kelli Stack on a short-handed breakaway in the second period. Coach Kevin Dineen's choice to put Labonte in goal was intriguing because Shannon Szabados has started in all world championship finals for Canada since her shutout of the Americans in the 2010 Olympic final. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Alpine skiing

Maze, Gisin race to first ever tie

Slovenia's Tina Maze and Switzerland's Dominique Gisin took different paths on an Olympic downhill course filled with flats and turns, jumps and bumps.

Add it all up, and they were each other's equal Wednesday. Gisin finished in 1 minute, 41.57 seconds. Maze finished in 1 minute, 41.57 seconds. A tie. And so two gold medals were awarded, the first time that's happened in 78 years of Olympic alpine skiing. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MEDALS

Nation	G	S	B	Tot.
Norway	4	3	5	12
Canada	**4**	**4**	**2**	**10**
Netherlands	4	2	4	10
United States of America	3	1	5	9
Russian Federation	2	4	3	9
Germany	6	1	1	8
Austria	1	4	0	5
Switzerland	3	0	1	4
Slovenia	1	1	2	4
Sweden	0	3	1	4

WHAT CANADA DID

WEDNESDAY

ALPINE SKIING

Women's Downhill - Larisa Yurkiw, Owen Sound, Ont., 20th, (one minute 43.46 seconds, +1.89 seconds)

CURLING

Women's Round Robin Session 4 - Canada 9 Britain 6 (Standings: Canada 3-0, T-1st)

Men's Round Robin Session 5 - Canada 7 Russia 4 (Standings: Canada 2-2, T-5th)

FIGURE SKATING

Pairs Free Program - Kirsten Moore-Towers (St. Catharines, Ont.) and Dylan Moscovitch (Toronto), 5th, (131.18); Meagan Duhamel (Lively, Ont.) and Eric Radford (Balmertown, Ont.), 7th, (127.32); Paige Lawrence (Kennedy, Sask.) and Rudi Swiegers (Kipling, Sask.), 14th, (103.01).

Final Pairs Ranking: Kirsten Moore-Towers and Dylan Moscovitch, 5th, (202.10); Meagan Duhamel and Eric Radford, 7th, (199.53); Paige Lawrence and Rudi Swiegers, 14th, (161.98).

ICE HOCKEY

Women's Preliminary Round - Group A - Canada 3 United States 2 (Standings: Canada 3-0, 1st)

LUGE

Doubles Run 1 - Tristan Walker (Cochrane, Alta.) and Justin Snith (Calgary), 4th, (49.857 seconds, +0.484 of a second)

Doubles Run 2 - Tristan Walker and Justin Snith, 6th, (49.983 seconds, +0.423 of a second)

Doubles Final Ranking: Tristan Walker and Justin Snith, 4th, (one minute 39.840 seconds, +0.907 of a second)

SNOWBOARD

Ladies' Halfpipe Qualification - Heat 1: x-Alexandra Duckworth, Kingsburg, N.S., 7th, (69.75); **Heat 2:** x-Katie Tsuyuki, Toronto, 9th, (54.25); Mercedes Nicoll, Whistler, B.C., 12th , (43.50).

x- qualified for semifinals

Ladies' Halfpipe Semifinals - Katie Tsuyuki, 7th, (56.25); Alexandra Duckworth, 11th, (32.50).

Ladies' Halfpipe Final Ranking: Katie Tsuyuki, 13th; Alexandra Duckworth, 17th; Mercedes Nicoll, 25th.

SPEED SKATING

Men's 1000m - Denny Morrison, Fort St. John, B.C., **Silver Medal**, (one minute 8.43 seconds, +0.04 of a second); Vincent De Haitre, Cumberland, Ont., 20th, (1:10.04); William Dutton, Humboldt, Sask., 26th, (1:10.61); Muncef Ouardi, Quebec City, 32nd, (1:11.07).

HOCKEY

PRELIMINARY ROUND

All times Eastern

MEN

Wednesday's results

Sweden 4 Czech Republic 2
Switzerland 1 Latvia 0

Thursday's games

Finland at Austria, 3 a.m.
Russia at Slovenia, 7:30 a.m.
Slovakia at United States, 7:30 a.m.
Canada at Norway, 12 p.m.

WOMEN

Group A

	GP	W	OTW	OTL	L	GF	GA	Pts
Canada	**3**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**11**	**2**	**9**
United States	3	2	0	0	1	14	4	6
Finland	3	0	1	0	2	5	9	2
Switzerland	3	0	0	1	2	3	18	1

Group B

	GP	W	OTW	OTL	L	GF	GA	Pts
Sweden	2	2	0	0	0	5	0	6
Russia	2	2	0	0	0	6	2	6
Japan	2	0	0	0	2	1	3	0
Germany	2	0	0	0	2	1	8	0

Note: Three points awarded for a regulation win, two for an overtime/shootout win and one for an overtime/shootout loss.

Wednesday's results

Finland 4 Switzerland 3 (OT)
Canada 3 United States 2

Tuesday's results

Sweden 4 Germany 0
Russia 2 Japan 1

Thursday's games

Japan at Germany, 3 a.m.
Sweden at Russia, 12 p.m.

CANADA 3, UNITED STATES 2

First Period — No Scoring.

Penalties — Lamoureux U.S. (tripping) 4:37, Ouellette Cda (holding) 10:59, Decker U.S. (Body Checking Minor) 17:47.

Second Period

1. United States, Knight 3 (Carpenter, Schleper) 37:34 (pp).

Penalties — Duggan U.S. (interference) 32:27, Johnston Cda (roughing) 32:52, Rougeau Cda (Body Checking Minor) 36:57.

Third Period

2. Canada, Agosta-Marciano 2 (Wickenheiser) 42:21 (pp).
3. Canada, Wickenheiser 2 (Spooner, Agosta-Marciano) 43:54.
4. Canada, Agosta-Marciano 3 (unassisted) 54:55.
5. United States, Schleper 1 (Decker, Lamoureux) 58:55.

Penalties — Decker U.S. (tripping) 40:53, Pucci U.S. (hooking) 51:59.

Shots

Canada	8	11	12—31
United States	11	13	3—27

Goal — Canada: Labonte (W); United States: Vetter (L). **Power plays (goal-chances)** — Canada: 1-5; United States: 1-4.

Attendance — 4,812 at Sochi, Russia.

CURLING

All Times Eastern

MEN

Wednesday's results

Canada 7 Russia 4
United States 9 Denmark 5
Norway 8 Germany 5
China 5 Switzerland 4
China 11 Germany 7
Britain 4 Switzerland 2
Denmark 8 Sweden 5

Thursday's games

Switzerland vs. Russia, 5 a.m.
Canada vs. Denmark, 5 a.m.
Norway vs. Sweden, 5 a.m.
Britain vs. United States, 5 a.m.

WOMEN

Wednesday's results

Canada 9 Britain 6
Japan 8 Russia 4
China 7 United States 4
Sweden 7 South Korea 4

Thursday's games

Canada vs. Denmark, 12 a.m.
China vs. Britain, 12 a.m.
Switzerland vs. Sweden, 12 a.m.
Sweden vs. Denmark, 10 a.m.
Russia vs. South Korea, 10 a.m.
Switzerland vs. **Canada**, 10 a.m.
Japan vs. United States, 10 a.m.

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PARTENAIRE MONDIAL

Monkey still on Canadian lugers' backs

The team of Tristan Walker and Justin Snith from Canada slide down the track past spectators during the men's doubles luge at the 2014 Winter Olympics on Wednesday in Krasnaya Polyana, Russia. Walker, from Cochrane, Alta., and Snith, from Calgary, were a whisker away from becoming the first Canadians to win an Olympic luge medal, coming just five-100ths of a second short of a podium appearance. Tobias Wendl and Tobias Arlt of Germany left with the gold medal. NATACHA PISARENKO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Price gets first shot in gold medal defence

Men's hockey. Habs goalie to start for Canada vs. Norway; Luongo will get his turn against Austria

Even though Roberto Luongo finished the Olympics four years ago, he won't start Team Canada's run at defending that gold medal.

Coach Mike Babcock chose to split the goaltending duties out of the gate in Sochi so it will be Carey Price facing Norway in Canada's opener on Thursday while Luongo will play Friday against Austria.

Babcock delivered the news to the goaltenders on Wednesday, roughly 36 hours before puck drop of the Norway game. Babcock didn't give a rationale for why he went with this order.

"I was going to play one of them in (each of) the first two games," Babcock said. "If I had put Luongo in, you'd be asking me the same question."

Recent performance certainly seemed to give Price the edge. In his past six NHL games for the Montreal Canadiens, Price is 4-1-1 with two shutouts, a 1.15 goals-against average and .967 save percentage.

Luongo is 1-5-0 with a 3.55 GAA and .880 save percentage in his past six for the Vancouver Canucks. He appeared to accept Babcock's decision.

"We're all here to play for Team Canada, man," Luongo said.

"It's not about one player. We're all pulling the same rope. It's a team game right now. It's not about Roberto Luongo or Carey Price or Mike Smith. It's about being part of Team Canada. It doesn't matter what role you are given, you have to embrace it and accept it."

Price, who will be making his Olympic debut, said all three goalies were all mentally prepared for anyone to start the tournament. That Babcock called on him this time is a career highlight.

"I seem to have had a lot in my young life so far," Price said. "It definitely ranks up there."

It wasn't immediately clear whether Price and Luongo would dress for both games, or if Smith would get a turn. Babcock also didn't reveal if he has decided on a starter for Sunday's game against Finland.

The decision will likely be made based on how well the goalies perform in their first games. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"Like we saw last time around, things change quickly and whoever's playing doesn't matter as long as all three guys, really, are ready to play."

Roberto Luongo, who replaced Martin Brodeur as the starter in 2010

Sweden beats Czech Rep.

Karlsson tallies twice in opening win

Erik Karlsson's impressive Olympic debut demonstrated why Sweden has more than enough talent to win it all.

Karlsson scored two goals in his first Olympic game, captain Henrik Zetterberg added a goal and Sweden beat the Czech Republic 4-2 Wednesday night in preliminary-round play in men's hockey.

Patrik Berglund also scored and Henrik Lundqvist made 27 saves as the Swedes opened the Sochi tournament with a display of their formidable offensive depth.

Also on Wednesday, Switzerland defeated Latvia 1-0 by scoring with just 7.9 seconds left in the game. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Figure Skating. Moore-Towers, Moscovitch will return for 2018 Games

Minutes after their program came to a smiling, giggling conclusion, Kirsten Moore-Towers and Dylan Moscovitch were spontaneously committing to another four years.

"This is far too much fun," Moore-Towers said through a wide smile. "Yeah. Hell yeah. We say we're going to take it one year at a time, but why not, right? Dream big."

The Canadian skaters finished fifth Wednesday in pairs at the Sochi Olympics on a night Russia returned to its old ways, utterly dominating the discipline. Tatiana Volosozhar and Maxim Trankov won the gold, teammates Ksenia Stolbova and Fedor Klimov captured the silver while Aliona Savchenko and Robin Szolkowy of Germany took bronze. THE CANADIAN PRESS

No pain, no gain

Moore-Towers, of St. Catharines, Ont., and Moscovitch, of Toronto, won silver in the team event at Sochi despite suffering setbacks.

- **Injuries.** Moore-Towers threw out her back in practice last week; Moscovitch's required daily injections for a painful foot infection.

Women's curling. Jones benefits from risky shot played by British skip

A missed gamble by British skip Eve Muirhead allowed Canada's Jennifer Jones to remain unbeaten in women's curling round-robin play at the Sochi Olympics.

With the clock running down and her team behind 8-6 to Canada at the women's Olympic tournament, Muirhead could have played an easy draw to the button with her last stone to take a tense game to an extra end at 8-8.

Instead, she gambled on removing three tightly bunched Canadian rocks to pick up three points for the win. The move backfired, and Canada clinched a 9-6 victory to stay unbeaten in three round-robin games.

"It was a gamble but ... that's the skip," Muirhead said. "They get the glory when they make them or the slack if they miss them."

Jones said she "probably would have thrown the draw to go to the extra end."

Canada will play twice on Thursday, against Denmark followed by Switzerland. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jennifer Jones calls a shot during her match against Britain on Wednesday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Men's curling

Jacobs rink back on top of its game to beat Russia

After a surprisingly poor start to the tournament, Brad Jacobs' rink decided to watch video clips of its victories in the national Olympic trials to fire them up.

It seemed to work, as Canada silenced a boisterous pro-Russia crowd and beat the hosts 7-4 Wednesday in men's Olympic curling action.

The Canadian rink from Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., scored four in the fifth end and held off the Russians to improve to 2-2 in the tournament. The win was a welcome relief for the Canadians, who entered the match following tough back-to-back losses to Switzerland and Sweden.

Canada is tied for fifth with Denmark in the standings. Jacobs will look to move up the rankings when his foursome faces the Danes on Thursday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
You need to be a bit more mysterious, especially on the work front. Keep both colleagues and rivals at arm's length and don't forget that knowledge is power.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
If you say one thing but do another, you leave yourself open to charges of hypocrisy. You don't need to cut corners or bend the truth. You have so much going for you that you will still come out ahead.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
As your ruler, Mercury, continues its retrograde phase, you need to be on your guard. It's likely that someone will try to cheat you in some way. But now that you know that, it won't be so easy.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Your mind may be working fast and you may have come to conclusions that satisfy you but are you sure they're correct? Listen to your inner voice and act on what it tells you, even if you don't understand it.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
One of your secrets could be dangerous if others get to know about it. Make sure you don't say anything today that might give your opponents a clue what you've been up to.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
It's important that you are honest about your feelings. If you keep them to yourself, negative emotions may build up to the point where an outburst of some sort is more likely than not.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Be careful what you say over the next few days because certain people won't take kindly to you making light of things that they take seriously.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
There is still time to make your feelings known. But if you leave it too late in the day, the opportunity will slip by and it won't come again for quite a while. Don't worry that you might be rejected.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You'll get more done if you take a gentler approach to partnership matters. Put yourself in their shoes and imagine how you'd feel if someone talked to you the way you talk to them at times.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You may want to be open but with communications planet Mercury now moving retrograde, you would be wise not to give too much away. Anyone asking personal questions is not to be trusted.

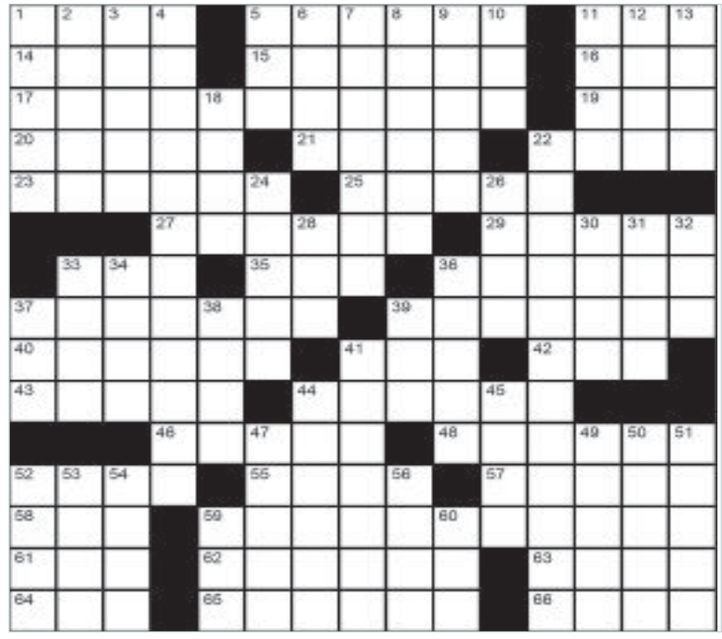
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
If you need to make some extra money then you will have to go into partnership with someone who shares your ambitions. You will also need to have a contract that commits you both.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You may not be as ambitious as some but you have no end of dreams you would like to see come true. One dream has your attention now, but is it a realistic dream or is it a fantasy dream? SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

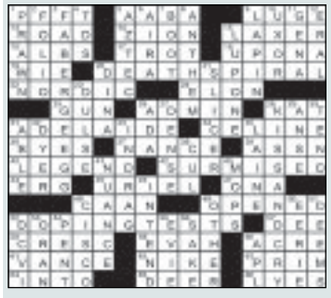
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Very, in Versailles
5. Lightly blots: 2 wds.
11. Stir
14. Retro-style pop syllable
15. "Game of Thrones" actress Ms. Clarke
16. Cut back
17 "Roxy Roller" band from Vancouver: 2 wds.
19. Litigate
20. France's capital, colloquially
21. __ Brasi, "The Godfather" (1972) enforcer
22. Cob's stuff
23. "Man of Steel" (2013) director, Zack __
25. Lord's house
27. Swiped
29.Jabbed
33. 'Neat' suffix
35. Food container
36. U2 tune
37. Anastasia's family, House of __
39. Historic theatre in Russia
40. Sam Worthington movie
41. Oz musical, The __
42. Initials-sharers of Miranda's portrayer on "Sex and the City"
43. "__ __, with Love" (1967)
44. Roman orator
46. Man-made material
48. Wanting to throw up feeling
52. SOCHI 2014 - One of the Olympic symbol's five
55. Banff National Park animals
57. Trims
58. Fabric belt
59. Robin Thicke's actress wife: 2 wds.
61. Guys
62. Actor, Haley Joel __
63. Rihanna's "__ Boy"
64. Lumberjack's tool
65. Styles
66. River of Flanders

Down
1. Chef's li'l amounts
2. "Laugh-In" co-host Dan
3. Manicurist's board
4. SOCHI 2014 - Winter Olympics sport: 2 wds.
5. Billy Williams link
6. __ acetate (Banana oil)
7. Tar-like deposit found in Alberta's oil sands
8. BC's __ Valley
9. Mr. Quinn
10. Bit
11. Too
12. Glum
13. Airy
18. Old depilatory brand
22. SOCHI 2014 - Winter Olympics sport
24. Revolving mechanism
26. German-built car
28. Ms. Tyler
30. "Jeopardy": 1983 hit for The Greg __ Band
31. Greek Myth: God of love
32. Agnus __ (Mass prayer)
33. De __ (Again, in Latin)
34. "Misty" line: "Look at me / __ __ helpless as a kitten up a tree..."
36. Bakery quantity
37. Rodent
38. __ a soul
39. Pen brand
41. City in southern Manitoba's Pembina Valley
44. Structure support in architecture
45. Tabula __ (Clean slate)
47. Rent
49. Position, fancy-style
50. Lyric poem variety
51. Lou Grant's portrayer Ed
52. Tomato type
53. Wild goat
54. Ten - One = This
56. Rational
59. 1990s fad game disc
60. Liq. measures

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

3	2						6	9
		6	5			7		
4			9		1			
9				5		4	8	
				1				
	6	2		8				1
			2		7			5
		9			5	3		
5	8						2	4

Yesterday's Sudoku

5	3	9	8	7	4	6	1	2
1	8	2	5	3	6	7	9	4
7	4	6	2	9	1	5	3	8
9	1	8	4	5	7	2	6	3
2	5	7	1	6	3	8	4	9
4	6	3	9	8	2	1	7	5
3	9	1	6	2	8	4	5	7
8	7	4	3	1	5	9	2	6
6	2	5	7	4	9	3	8	1

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